

# For Your Health and Benefits

From the Arizona Department of Administration  
Human Resources/Benefits Office



January 2005



## Watching Your Weight in the New Year

You've tried Atkins, South Beach, Dr. Phil and the Hollywood Diet, all to no avail. Why not consider an old standby in 2005?

Weight Watchers has been helping folks successfully lose weight and keep it off for more than 40 years.



"It's a healthier way of eating and living," says Charmayne Skow, a statewide accountant with the Department of Administration in Phoenix. "Weight Watchers is not a fad diet—it's something you can do for the rest of your life."

Skow has lost 55 pounds on the Weight Watchers plan since May of 2004 and says she feels "absolutely wonderful." The anticipation of graduating from Arizona State University and attending job interviews is what spurred Skow to action. She wanted to feel better about herself.

Founded by Jean Nidetch in the early 1960s, Weight Watchers boasts more than one million members with close to 45,000 weekly meetings in 30 countries around the world. The franchise sprouted up in Arizona in 1967. Today there are 25 State agency groups that meet weekly, with 687 members and 1,239 pounds lost in

the month of November 2004. Lorena Brewer administers the At Work Program for State agencies and leads Weight Watchers groups at both the Attorney General's office and the Supreme Court. A self-described "yo-yo dieter" for many years, she believes in the program that helped her

lose 20 pounds and finally keep it off.

"Weight Watchers teaches you how to eat in the real world," Brewer explains. "You learn lifestyle skills that help you lose weight and maintain while still enjoying family gatherings and eating out."

The latest program rolled out by Weight Watchers in August of 2004 is known as TurnAround. It's made up of two basic plans. Many people are familiar with the "Winning Points" plan (now known as the Flex Plan), which was introduced in 1997. With this plan, every food is assigned a number of points based on its fat, fiber and calorie content and each person has a "daily point target" based on his or her current weight.

The second and newest plan is simply called the Core Plan. It focuses on eating wholesome foods from all the food groups while

discouraging processed, packaged and cured foods.

The Core Plan has been described as "a plan for those who don't like the idea of keeping track of points," but dieters are still encouraged to use moderation and portion control through what is known as "satisfying eating." This plan allows dieters to eat "as much as needed to feel satisfied."

According to Brewer, some members have commented that the Core Plan helps them "clean up their eating" so that they're not consuming so many processed foods.

Skow says the Flex Plan worked best for her lifestyle, but admitted that it's not necessarily the plan you choose that ensures success.

"You have to want it," Skow says. "It can't be something that's pushed on you. You must be motivated from within."

For those who have a hard time with self-motivation, the support groups can be a tremendous help. Weekly group meetings bring dieters together to meet people with similar weight-loss goals. It's a time to exchange ideas and receive support from leaders like Brewer.

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# Health Screening At Work

## A-B-C-D and now E to Recognize Skin Cancer

One more letter should be added to the alphabetic list of warning signs doctors use to identify suspicious moles on the skin and possible signs of melanoma, a potentially deadly skin cancer.

The "E" joins A-B-C-D and stands for evolving, according to a group of NYU School of Medicine dermatologists and their Australian colleagues. Their report is published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA).

### The New Warning Signs

- A: Asymmetry** - if one-half of a mole doesn't match the other half
- B: Border irregularity** - the edges of a mole are ragged, notched or blurred
- C: Color** - a mix of brown, black, red, white or blue
- D: Diameter** - measuring bigger than the size of a pencil eraser
- E: Evolving** - changes in appearance or itching

If you have any of these signs, show your mole to your doctor.

Deadly skin cancer strikes more than 50,000 people in the USA each year and nearly 8,000 will die from it, according to the American Cancer Society. Excessive exposure to sunlight, a fair complexion, a family history of melanoma, and numerous moles, among other factors, place people at higher risk for developing the disease. With early detection and prompt treatment, however, melanoma is highly curable.

### Skin Cancer Screening at Work

Your employee wellness office

offers skin cancer screening at worksites from April-September.

We contract with Banner Occupational Health to travel to worksites throughout Arizona. This screening is free to state employees.

If you would like to schedule a screening at your worksite, call 602.771.WELL for more information.

### Free Mini-Health Screening

Any State employee is welcome! It's all included! Screening takes



as little as 15 minutes and no appointment is necessary.

☐ Checks of blood pressure and percent of body fat

- ☐ Height/weight/frame size assessment
- ☐ Cholesterol and blood sugar check (blood draw)
- ☐ Personal and confidential report mailed to your home.
- ☐ Women age 40 and over are eligible for a free osteoporosis screening.

Women under 40 can also have an osteoporosis screening for a copay of \$30.00.

Men 40 and over can get a prostate cancer (PSA) screening exam by blood draw for a copay of \$5.00.

An eight-hour fasting period before this screening is required (for the cholesterol and blood sugar screening).

## Mini Health Screenings for January are scheduled at the following sites:

Yuma- Wednesday, January 12, 2005 6:30am-10:00am Arizona State Prison - Yuma, Warden's Conference Room

Yuma- Thursday, January 13, 2005 7:00am-9:00am Dept. of Transportation 2243 E. Gila Ridge Rd. Conference Room

Tucson- Tuesday, January 18, 2005 11:00am-3:00pm Arizona State Prison Tucson Warden's Conference Room

Douglas- Wednesday, January 19, 2005 8:00am-11:00am Arizona State Prison - Douglas

Phoenix- Tuesday, January 25, 2005 8:00am-11:00am Dept. of Environmental Quality 1110 W. Washington Room 250

Safford- Wednesday, January 26, 2005 8:00am-10:00am Arizona State Prison - Safford

Winslow- Thursday, January 27, 2005 8:00am-10:00am Dept. of Economic Security 319 E. 3rd St. Conference Room

If you have any questions, please call us at 602.771.WELL, option 2.

### Published by

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[www.benefitoptions.az.gov](http://www.benefitoptions.az.gov)  
[wellness@ad.state.az.us](mailto:wellness@ad.state.az.us)

Phone: 602.542.5008 FAX: 602.542.4744  
Persons with a disability may request reasonable accommodation by contacting the Benefits Office. If you need this issue in an alternative format, please call 602.542.5008.

## Resolution Exercise: Choosing a Personal Trainer

If exercise is on your 2005 New Year's resolution list, you might want to consider working with a personal trainer. According to the US Department of Labor, personal training is the eleventh fastest-growing industry in the country. But beware—the industry is unregulated.

That means it's up to you to insist on the right qualifications when choosing a personal trainer.

"Many certifications for personal trainers are bogus," said Walter R. Thompson, Ph.D., Professor of Kinesiology and Health at Georgia State University and spokesperson for the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) – a widely respected professional organization.

In an exclusive interview with *Health-eheadlines*, Dr. Thompson outlined four essential things to know about finding and working with a personal trainer:

### Insist on appropriate training:

Because there are so many certifications and consumers don't know how to assess them, Dr. Thompson recommends you look for credentials specifically from two recognized organizations: American College of Sport Medicine and the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). The online ACSM

ProFinder ([www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)) and NSCA Find a Trainer ([www.nscalift.org](http://www.nscalift.org)) lists the names of currently certified trainers by state and how to contact them.

### Assess your current fitness

**level.** Before you take a step on a treadmill or lift one weight, the personal trainer should evaluate your current level of fitness and take into consideration your age and medical history. If you're a man over 45 or woman over 55, savvy trainers will insist you get a doctor's clearance before your first training session. This is for your safety.

Medical testing should be conducted under a doctor's supervision (to rule out underlying heart disease) and will give your trainer baseline measurements and targets for goal setting.

### Identify short- and long-term

**desired results.** Go for longer-term goals with short-term targets that are achievable and measurable. A high-quality trainer will spend a lot more time with you the first few lessons to get to know you and your needs and goals can be revised at continuing intervals.

"For many people, the biggest problem is motivation to exercise,"

said Dr. Thompson. Personal trainers are there to get you to the gym and keep you on track. This is benefit enough for many people with the means to hire a personal trainer for the long term.

### Move on if . . . the trainer

tries to sell you such items as dietary supplements, equipment, special gear, clothing or shoes. Commercial gain has no place in personal training.

In the end, whether you decide to train with a man or woman is your individual preference. Ask the trainer for personal references (and call current clients). Train at a gym or fitness center where you have access to state-of-the-art equipment. It is not recommended that you have a trainer come to your home.

"Remember, this is a personal service industry," said Dr. Thompson. "The trainer will have his or her hands on you while spotting weights or adjusting your form. Choose a trainer you feel most comfortable with in this intimate setting."

### Tai Chi

This class, taught in the traditional format, can help reduce stress while increasing flexibility and vitality.

Phoenix- 10 Wednesdays, January 12-March 16, 2005 1:15pm-2:15pm  
Arizona Supreme Court  
1501 W. Washington Exercise Room (Beginner - open to all State employees)

Phoenix- 10 Wednesdays, January 12-March 16, 2005  
2:15pm-3:15pm Arizona Supreme Court 1501 W. Washington Exercise Room (Intermediate - open to all State employees)

This class has a \$60 copay and is open to State employees and their families. Please call 602-771-WELL to register!

The poster is titled "ACSM GUIDELINES for healthy aerobic activity ...". It lists four bullet points: "Exercise 3 to 5 days each week", "Warm up for 5 to 10 minutes before aerobic activity", "Maintain your exercise intensity for 30 to 45 minutes", and "Gradually decrease the intensity of your workout, then stretch to cool down during the last 5 to 10 minutes". Below the text, it says "If weight loss is major goal, participate in your aerobic activity at least 30 minutes for five days each week." There are three small images: a person running, a person swimming, and a person doing a yoga-like stretch. At the bottom, it says "... www.acsm.org" and features the American College of Sports Medicine logo.



-weight watchers, from pg.1

"Sometimes we feel alone in our fat," says Brewer. "But in a group situation, you find out that's not the case."



State groups meet for 10 weeks at a time and most weekly meetings follow a similar format. They begin with private weigh-ins followed by celebrations of success, a review of challenges, a question-answer period, and a new topic every week to be covered by the leader. Then there's the motivational send-off to end things on a positive note.

Attendees can expect to receive a "Getting Started" book at their first class, along with a "Points Finder" slide guide and a "Tracker," which is similar to a food diary. During the remaining weeks, handouts covering a wide variety of subjects are given out. Topics covered include recipes, exercise information, hints and tips on healthy eating and more.

"I enjoyed the plan and especially the support from my leader and the others in my group," says Skow. "Knowing that other people are going through the same thing you are is a wonderful feeling." Now that Skow has gone from a size 24 to 16, she's become quite the shopper. She says she enjoys shopping a lot more now that there are so many more options available to her. She admits that she has more to weight to lose, but for now, she truly feels like a new person.

"I don't want to be who I was before. I see old pictures of myself and I don't like it," Skow says. "But I like who I am now. I'm a different person! I think I'm more outgoing and a happier person in general."

**For those interested in joining an existing At Work group or starting a new one, Brewer advises calling her directly at 602.248.0303 or 1.800.651.6000, extension 21.**

**She will put you in touch with a State employee worksite contact who will give you all the details. If you are interested in starting a group at your worksite, you will need 20 interested employees (15 in rural areas). Cost for State employees is \$59 per 10-week series (a savings of nearly 50 percent over the standard rate). The fee includes materials.**

**Dependents may join at a rate of \$100 for the first session and \$90 for each subsequent session.**

## What's Feldenkrais?

People take **Feldenkrais**

*Awareness through Movement® (ATM)* classes for a variety of reasons. Some want to relieve pain or tension. Some want to improve their flexibility or balance. Some simply enjoy feeling energized and refreshed by the slow meditative movement. Feldenkrais is helpful for people who experience pain from stress or injury. It can help people regain mobility and agility.

ATM classes are done lying on the floor and consist of gentle meditative movements. Each ATM class is different, focusing on a different aspect of functioning, from freeing the spine to expanding breathing. Through "guided attention" each person finds the movement or position that works best for him/her.

Here is what students have said

about **The Feldenkrais Method®**.

*"I have learned that it is not necessary to put forth a lot of effort to achieve the results to minimize or eliminate soreness and pain in the body."*

*"I am aware of what my body does and does not like, especially in my work area and in my posture. For example, after a few classes, I realized that my work area was not organized in a way for me to be comfortable during the day. I reorganized it and have noticed benefits from doing so. I do not have the tenseness in my upper back and shoulders that I had before. I have also become aware of when I am not sitting correctly in my chair."*

Katie Underwood has been teaching Feldenkrais at the state for over six years. She says, "I first did Feldenkrais because I was amazed

at how differently I felt after a class - taller, lighter, more focused. It relieved pain in my upper back and my knees. I also love the way

I feel more calm and energetic." Katie has a master's degree in engineering and has taken over a 1000 hours of education in teaching the Feldenkrais method.

For more information visit [www.feldenkrais.com](http://www.feldenkrais.com) or e-mail [Kathryn.underwood@att.net](mailto:Kathryn.underwood@att.net).

## Try a class!

Phoenix- 4 Tuesdays, February 1-22, 2005 11:30am-12:30pm  
Arizona Supreme Court 1501 W. Washington, Exercise Room

There is a \$20 copay for this class. Call 602.771.WELL to register

